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Braham Mayor Nate George testimony - February 16, 2023
Minnesota Senate Capital Improvement Committee

Thank you, Chair Pappas, ranking Republican Lead Housley and committee members. My name is Nate George, Mayor of Braham, elected this past November. Braham residents will shoulder a massive fiscal burden with 2023 tax notices about to come out showing a 43% property tax hike due – in large part – to numerous unplanned emergency water system repair costs that depleted our general fund. We've already had two major watermain breaks in less than a month this year; not terribly unusual given the 90+ year age of most of our water and sewer pipes. We're a City of 1,800, and more than a quarter of our families are at poverty level or lower.

We are grateful to finally see the State matching funds going to PFA, and Lead Service Line funds will benefit our community greatly. We are also hoping you provide our City with surplus General Fund dollars in this bill – or later this year. We're asking \$3.55 million for an immediate first-phase start to upgrade the failing infrastructure; those costs just went up \$2.5 million last month due to new MPCA design requirements.

Lastly, please keep the current needs-based PFA funding formula. That is the fairest, most equitable solution for cities of all sizes and that have varying needs. Thank you.

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